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BOROUGH OF REIGATE.



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

A. E. PORTER, M.A., M.D., D.P.H.

TOGETHER WITH

THE ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Sanitary Inspector,

J. P. HUMPHERY, M.S.I.A.,

for the Year 1916.

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BOROUGH OF REIGATE.

ANNUAL REPORT

of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1916.

To the Chairman and Members of the Sanitary Committee.

GENTLEMEN.

I beg to present my Annual Report for the year 1916, the eleventh of its series.

In view of the shortage of paper, and the demands on printing establishments, the Local Government Board suggest that annual reports should be of the nature of interim ones, and be confined to matters which have affected the public health during the year, especially any matters arising from or connected with the war, outbreaks of infectious disease, and measures for maternity and child welfare.

This suggestion has been followed, and the usual statistical tables are omitted, but an account is given of the work carried out during the year in connection with child welfare.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

ARTHUR E. PORTER,

Reigate,

Medical Officer of Health.

17th April, 1917.

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SECTION I.

Vital Statistics.

Population.—The Registrar-General fixes the 1916 mid year population at 28,464 for calculating the birth rate, and 26,161 for calculating the death rate, the latter including only the estimated civil population. Both are likely to be appreciably far from the truth, and comparative rates based upon them are therefore probably unreliable.

Births.—The births actually registered in the Borough were 464, becoming 466 when adjusted for outward and inward transfers. Of these 230 were males and 236 females. The nett result compares with 440 in 1915, 452 in 1914, and a mean of 467 for the five years 1911-15. This rise is somewhat unexpected under the circumstances, but may be partially accounted for by the rise in the marriage rate. The birth rate on the population figure given above is 16·4 per 1,000, as against 15·1 in 1915 and a mean of 16·2 for the five years 1911-15. The illegitimate births were 36 in number, which is higher than the average of earlier years.

Deaths.—The nett deaths registered in 1916 were 309, as against 335 in 1915, and a mean of 310 for the five years 1911-15. If the population taken by the Registrar-General be accepted, the death rate is 11·8 per 1,000. As pointed out in my last report, however, a comparison of this figure with previous death rates is entirely fallacious, since the population of the Borough is now largely deprived of its young healthy men, whose death rate is almost negligible. Fifty-one per cent. of the deaths occurred among persons of 65 and upwards, 18 per cent. among persons of 80 and upwards, and between 2 and 3 per cent. among nonagenarians. Deaths from malignant disease, heart disease and kidney disease were all above the average. The death rate in 1915 was estimated at 12·5, and the mean for the five years 1911-15

was 10·9. For England and Wales the 1915 death rate was 14·0.

Infant Mortality.—There were 28 deaths of infants under the the age of twelve months returned in the weekly sheets of the Sub-district Registrar, and only one of these was considered as transferable to another district by the Registrar General. There were no infant deaths transferred to the Borough from outside districts. The Registrar-General, however, gives 26 as the total for the year. The cause of the discrepancy is not obvious. The number in 1915 was 26, and the mean for the five years 1911-15 was 33. On the 466 births the infant mortality was 58, or 56, according as to which figure is correct, as against 59 in 1915 and a mean of 70 for the five years 1911-15. As I pointed out in my last annual report, the lowest figure previously recorded was 60 in 1910. In England and Wales the infant mortality in 1915 was 91 per 1,000 births.

Of the 27 deaths 18 may be ascribed to causes operative before birth, namely 8 from prematurity, 3 from congenital malformations, 3 from debility, 3 from convulsions within three weeks of birth, and one from congenital syphilis. When two-thirds of the deaths are due to such causes, the necessity for some organisation for ante-natal care scarcely requires emphasis. There were 5 deaths from pneumonia, 3 from whooping cough, and one from diarrhœa. Hospital treatment is probably the only method by which the mortality from measles, whooping cough and acute diseases of the lungs is capable of reduction.

The drop in the infant mortality during 1915 and 1916 is gratifying. Too much credit must not be ascribed to official efforts, but parents undoubtedly realise to a greater degree than formerly the value of the "rising generation," and the assistance which has been afforded to expectant and nursing mothers by the voluntary agency, to which reference will be made subsequently, should not be overlooked.

The Government scheme for the diagnosis and treatment of syphilis may lead in the course of years to a diminution in the mortality from antenatal causes. I hope at all events to make some investigations on this subject when the Centre is in working order.

The deaths of illegitimate babies were 3 in number, corresponding to an infant mortality of 83 per 1,000 births.

Maternity and Child Welfare. The scheme adopted by the Borough Council comprised the appointment of a Health Visitor, and the equipment of a house as a centre where medical consultations for babies and expectant mothers can take place, and where meetings of mothers for "health talks," sewing classes, etc. can be held. Great difficulty was experienced in finding a vacant house of suitable size and of central situation, and it was not until the end of December that such a house could be obtained. It should, however, suit requirements admirably. In addition to providing an office for the Health Visitor and rooms for the caretaker, there is accommodation for the School Nurse, and the doctor's room will be used also for the purpose of a school clinic. There is a large waiting room and a nursery.

A Health Visitor was appointed early in the year, and began work at the end of February. She left, however, to take up another appointment at the end of August, and it was not until December that her successor was able to make a start. Consequently domiciliary visiting occupied less than eight months of the year, and a considerable amount of time necessarily elapsed before the two officers settled down to the work. In all 110 primary visits were made to houses where babies had been born (excluding visits in connection with still-births, or where the babies had died of prematurity within a few days). Owing to the change of officers subsequent visits were less frequent than is desirable.

and in 51 instances the primary visit was the only one. This number, however, includes the primary visits to babies born in December, while there were no secondary visits to babies born in 1915 to counterbalance. When the centre is in working order, the supervision of babies will be rendered much easier. Twenty babies were visited twice, nine 3 times, two 4 times, two 5 times, seven 6 times, one 8 times, one 9 times, two 10 times, and one 14 times, making a total of 178 visits.

While in many instances where the mothers are careful, intelligent, and sufficiently well off, and where the babies are breast fed, few visits will be necessary, the general aim has been for each baby to be seen twice in the first month, and then once a month for the first year. Where breast feeding cannot be maintained, where the mothers are ignorant or careless, or where the babies are obviously not thriving, more frequent visits are considered necessary.

No definite arrangements have as yet been made for keeping the infants under supervision after the first year of life, but it will be desirable to persuade as many mothers as possible to bring the babies to the Centre at regular intervals, say once in three months, until they attain school age.

At present the Health Visitor weighs the babies at their homes until they are too heavy for her spring balance, and the weights are entered on charts. Each mother is given a chart on a card for hanging up. A booklet is sent to each mother, giving some suggestions on feeding and the general care of infants, and a few hints on weaning.

It was ascertained that 37 of the 110 babies visited were provided with cots, and 51 with comforters. These figures should be capable of improvement as the work proceeds. In 92 instances the infants were breast fed at the first visit, but in 17 of these the milk failed, or early weaning was adopted for other reasons, the principal one being illegitimacy, where

the mothers returned to work. In 18 instances the babies were fed artificially from birth, the principal reason again being the illegitimacy of the child. If a larger proportion of the babies had been followed up, it is probable that early weaning and supplementary feeding would have been noted more frequently. Two-hourly feeding was found to be the usual practice. It is so deeply ingrained among mothers of families and their unskilled advisers, that the more modern and sounder method of longer intervals between meals is not always easy to inculcate. It is better for the mothers, and most infants of normal vitality benefit by it.

In many instances where breast feeding was impracticable, the use of a well-known brand of dried milk was successfully advocated. Its employment avoids some of the difficulties and dangers connected with the use of cows' milk in cottages, and its composition is probably more constant and reliable than cows' milk under war conditions. It is, however, somewhat more expensive.

Voluntary Agency.—At the outbreak of war a local War Distress Fund was collected and administered by a Committee. Among the sub-committees appointed was one for assisting expectant and nursing mothers, whose husbands are serving with the Imperial Forces. This sub-committee were good enough to extend their services to the assistance of all necessitous mothers, and a special fund was raised to provide help for those whose husbands are in civil employment. They were consequently appointed the Maternity and Child Welfare Sub-Committee of the Sanitary Committee, consisting entirely of ladies with the exception of three members of the Sanitary Committee. Each lady has charge of a certain number of streets, and keeps the material needs of the expectant and nursing mothers in her district under supervision. The Council's Health Visitor is able to obtain assistance in necessitous cases through this Sub-committee,

The Sub-committee meets monthly, and the Town Clerk, the Medical Officer of Health, and the Health Visitor attend.

As already indicated, the funds at the disposal of the Sub-Committee are derived from two sources, namely a grant from the Distress Fund Account which is applied to the families of sailors and soldiers, and a sum collected partly by private subscription and partly as the result of a Pastoral Play organised for the purpose. The former fund amounted to £36 5s. 8d., and the latter to £44 2s. 6d. (£20 being derived from the nett proceeds of the Play). By the end of the year £26 17s. 6½d. had been expended on naval and military cases, and £6 1s. 8d. on civilian cases. It should be noted that the latter class had only been assisted for a portion of the year.

The Infant Welfare Societies of New Zealand had sent a large number of infant outfits to the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, and through the kind co-operation of the latter, the Sub-Committee were able to provide clothing for 70 babies during the year. Garments derived from the same source were also distributed to a considerable number of older children.

The Chairman (Mrs. James Powell) of the Sub-Committee reported that during the year 119 houses were visited by the members: that 95 new maternity cases and 70 mothers came under their supervision, and that 51 mothers were assisted, mostly with milk, but also with help in their homes after confinement.

The value of this assistance can scarcely be overstated, and the inhabitants of the Borough owe a deep debt of gratitude to the ladies who have undertaken this truly national work for their untiring efforts. The work will no doubt grow in volume and importance when the Centre is opened, and without it the official work of the Corporation would lose much of its value.

Ante-natal Work.—A few visits to expectant mothers have been paid by the Health Visitors, but this valuable work will only be capable of development when the centre is established. There will probably be no great difficulty in getting in touch with many expectant mothers through the medium of the Maternity and Child Welfare Sub-Committee, and through the co-operation of the midwives practising in the Borough, which it is hoped to obtain.

There are three midwives, who succeeded in being included in the Roll of the Central Midwives Board through having been in bona-fide practice for a sufficient number of years. Their work is confined almost exclusively to Redhill and Earlswood.

There are no midwives possessing the certificate of the Central Midwives Board who practise in the Borough. From such information as I have been able to obtain, I am of opinion that there is a need for two trained nurses to act as midwives or as monthly nurses, and ample scope for them, especially if they undertake the ordinary duties of a district nurse as well.

Birth Notification.—Notifications were received of 368 out of the 464 births registered during the year, a percentage of 79·3. This, however, becomes increased to 82·3 if 17 births occurring in the Union Infirmary are eliminated. Provision had not been made for the notification of such births, but this has now been rectified.

In the absence of continuous work by a Health Visitor, it was not possible to fix the responsibility of the omissions to notify on the proper persons. This is a matter which will receive greater attention during the current year.

Arrangements have been made with the Master of the Guardians' Institution to let us know when mothers confined there leave for their homes, so that the babies can then be visited, unless they leave the neighbourhood, as is frequently the case.

SECTION II.

The Infectious Diseases.

A. The Notifiable Diseases.—The usual table is omitted in accordance with the suggestion of the Local Government Board.

Scarlet Fever.—Including three cases discovered through the supervision of absentees from school, who were not under medical care, and excluding a number of patients notified where the diagnosis subsequently proved incorrect, there were 103 cases of the disease during the year. Of these 58 were inmates or members of the staff of the Royal Earlswood Institution, where there was a sharp outbreak between the 21st February and the end of March. A few cases occurred during this period in the families of attendants living outside the grounds of the Institution. In all, 41 of the patients were above the age of 15.

The 45 cases among the general population were in 33 different houses, and 35 were removed to hospital. Apart from those associated with the Institution referred to, the majority occurred during the first four months of the year, and continued the prevalence of 1914 and 1915. There were only 9 cases in all during the last four months, when the incidence of this disease is usually at its height. There were no deaths among these 45 cases, but two of the inmates of the Institution succumbed.

Return Cases.—In five instances cases of the disease occurred in houses to which a patient had recently returned from hospital, the intervals being 2, 3, 9, 11 and 14 days respectively. Forty-five patients were discharged during the year.

Diphtheritic Infection.—The throats and noses of all scarlet fever patients admitted to hospital are examined bacteriologically, and 11 out of the 35 were found to be

harbouring the diphtheria bacillus, 4 in the throat, 6 in the nose and 1 in both throat and nose. They are not discharged until negative results have been obtained, and I examine them again after their return home. Three of them were thus found to be still infectious, and were kept under observation until negative results were obtained. Where precautions of this nature are not taken, outbreaks of scarlet fever are liable to be followed subsequently by outbreaks of diphtheria, though the sequence is not so fully recognised as it should be.

Diphtheria.—Including 3 cases at St. Anne's School, and 7 found either in school or among children absent from school and not under medical care, there were 14 cases during the year. The 11 patients among the general population occurred in 11 different houses, and 10 of them were removed to hospital. There were no deaths. In 4 of the patients the infection was confined to the nose. There was a small group of 5 cases among the children attending the Infant Department of Frenches Road School in September and October, of which only 2 had been placed under medical care, and there was also a group of 3 among children attending Salfords School in the adjoining Rural District, and forming part of a somewhat extensive outbreak which occurred in the spring and summer. One of these 3 was a case of nasal diphtheria identified in school, and the other 2 were found by following up absentees from school. As I have charge of this Rural District, the problem of dealing with the outbreak was greatly simplified.

Carriers.—Thirteen children from infected houses were examined bacteriologically (throats and noses) and two were found to be infectious, one in the nose, the other in nose and throat. Both were removed to hospital.

Among the patients discharged from hospital, after negative results had been obtained there, one was found to be still infectious, and remained in this condition at the

end of the year. The child is kept under observation at home.

Chronic infection.—One case of diphtheria retained the infection from the 11th October, 1915, till the 3rd March, 1916. One scarlet fever patient, who had the infection of diphtheria in the nose on the 4th August, 1915, yielded positive swabs till the 26th May, 1916. A similar patient gave positive results from the 8th January till the 13th August, 1916.

Such patients are liable to be fruitful sources of outbreaks of diphtheria unless kept under supervision.

Enteric Fever.—There were no cases during the year.

Puerperal Fever.—One case occurred in August, an unmarried woman for whose confinement no preparations had been made. The child was stillborn, and the mother was removed to the Union Infirmary, where she died shortly afterwards.

Cerebro-spinal Fever.—In April the wife of a private in the Royal Garrison Artillery (stationed in India) was removed to the Union Infirmary with meningitis. A specimen of the spinal fluid showed the presence of the specific micro-organism, and the patient was transferred to the Isolation Hospital. She died within a fortnight from the onset of the disease, the origin of which was not traced.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.—Three cases were notified. Two were very slight attacks: the third required the assistance of the Health Visitor for a fortnight.

Measles.—There were 22 notifications, representing primary cases in the same number of houses, and not the total number that actually occurred. They were all under medical care, and recovered. There was no epidemic, and over a third of the patients were above the age of 15. Visits were paid to all the working-class dwellings involved. No cases were notified by parents, but one (a visitor) was notified by the head of the household.

German Measles.—Eighty-nine primary cases were notified, all except 29 being above the age of 15. Nearly half were between the ages of 15 and 25, and a feature was the incidence of the disease among adults in large houses. There was no true epidemic and no mortality. Nearly half of them occurred in July. No cases were notified by parents or guardians.

Pulmonary tuberculosis.—Excluding a patient previously notified in 1913, there were 41 notifications. Nine were newcomers and three of them were only on a visit, one was an inmate of Netherne Asylum, derived from the Guardians' Institution in 1902, two were contacts sent to the dispensary and examined by the Tuberculosis Officer with positive results, and five were discharged from the Army. Twenty-five were males, and 16 females.

The County Council have a dispensary in Redhill, but the organisation of the work has been greatly interfered with by the war, and there have been many changes in the medical staff. The home supervision of cases, and the examination of contacts leave much to be desired and there is no after-care organisation. The Borough Council's Health Visitor acted as tuberculosis nurse during her term of office, and when she left, one of the County Council's school nurses took her place. This arrangement proved far from satisfactory from our point of view, and probably our second Health Visitor will pay the domiciliary visits necessary for my purposes for the present at all events.

Seventeen of the patients received institutional treatment at various sanatoria or chest hospitals, and one was removed to the Union Infirmary.

Other forms of tuberculosis.—Four cases among males and 3 among females were notified, the organs affected being the knee joint in two instances, the peritoneum in two, and the ankle, the bowel and the meninges in one instance each.

Two of the patients were treated at the Reigate and Redhill Hospital.

Erysipelas.—Thirteen notifications were received, and call for no comment.

B.—The Non-notifiable Diseases.

Mumps.—This was the disease of the non-notifiable class that gave us most trouble. Starting in South Park in the autumn of 1915, it spread to the Reigate schools in 1916, and thence to Redhill where it became epidemic, and was showing signs of increasing at the end of the year.

There were 569 cases reported and confirmed as to diagnosis among school children during 1916. They are visited to ensure that no case of diphtheria is being mistaken for mumps, an accident that not infrequently happens when the former infection exists concurrently, and which is liable to lead to fatal consequences. The work is very laborious, and so far as 1916 was concerned was unproductive in finding missed cases of diphtheria. The number reported by no means represents all the attacks of mumps which occurred, since it takes no account of cases during the holidays and among persons above and below school age.

Although it proved necessary to close the National Infant School on the 3rd April, the Holmesdale Junior School on the 14th April, St. Matthew's Infant School on the 20th November, and the whole of the Hooley Road Schools on the 15th December, school infection appeared to play a smaller part than usual, owing to the careful supervision exercised by the school teachers.

Whooping Cough.—There were 229 cases reported from the various schools, in 5 of which closure was necessary, namely St. Joseph's, St. Matthew's Infants, Frenches Road Infants, Hooley Road Infants, and Cromwell Road Infants. The majority of the cases were reported during the month

of June. There were in all 5 deaths, one a child of 5 in May, one an infant of two months in August, the remaining three occurring in September, two being infants of 4 and 5 months respectively, and one a child of 4 years.

A circular is sent to each house known to be attacked, pointing out the dangerous nature of the disease and the necessity for calling in medical aid. These circulars are also distributed to the children when a school is closed.

Chicken-pox.—One hundred and eighty-four cases were reported from the schools. The Infant Departments of St. Mark's and St. John's Schools were closed in March and April respectively.

Influenza.—During the severe weather of March, influenza became epidemic among the children attending the Girls' and Infants' Departments of Frenches Road School, which was closed for ten days.

SECTION III.

Sanitary Administration.

Owing to shortage of staff and the work required by troops stationed in the Borough, systematic inspections of all kinds were necessarily abandoned, and I propose to refer to the subject very briefly.

Examination of Cows in milk.—The Council's Veterinary Surgeon, Mr. Squair, made his usual quarterly inspection of the cows in the Borough, a number varying from 193 to 202. It was only in the second quarter that any suspicious condition of animal or udder was detected. One cow in this batch was emaciated, but failed to react to the tuberculin test: she was slaughtered and a diseased liver was found. Another cow had an indurated udder, but the tuberculin test gave a negative result. The milk was, however, withdrawn from consumption.

Unsound food.—The following articles were surrendered as unfit for food and were destroyed: 28 stone of beef, 13 pieces of bacon, 7 hearts, 5 boxes of kidneys, 6 pads of mixed fish, 2 baskets of shrimps, 4 bags of winkles, 1 tub of sprats and 1 bag of whelks. In addition 1 pig, 5 pigs' plucks, 3 bovine livers and 4 lungs were found to be diseased at the time of slaughtering and were destroyed.

Sale of Food and Drugs Acts.—Nine samples of butter, 4 of margarine, 9 of milk and 1 of sugar were taken for analysis. One sample of milk was found to be adulterated. It appeared probable that the deficiency was due to careless mixing, and the vendor was cautioned. The sample of sugar was found to be contaminated by various extraneous articles, apparently derived from floor sweepings, and the vendor was prosecuted and fined costs and Analyst's fees. One of the samples of margarine was sold unlabelled, and the vendor was fined £1 and costs.

At the request of the Local Government Board 45 informal samples of baking powder, egg powder, self-raising flour and cream of tartar substitute were taken and examined for the presence of arsenic. Seven out of 16 samples of baking powder were found to contain arsenic, but in amounts less than 1 part per million. Of 11 samples of egg powder all were arsenic free except one in which the amount was less than one part per million. Five out of 9 samples of self-raising flour contained arsenic in the same small proportion. Of 9 samples of cream of tartar substitute 2 showed no arsenic, 3 contained arsenic to the amount of 2 parts per million, 3 to the amount of 1 part per million, and 1 less than 1 part per million.

The Royal Commission on Arsenical Poisoning placed the permissible limit at 1.43 parts per million. Much larger amounts, running up to 10 parts per million in egg powder, and 6.6 parts per million in baking powder, have been found

by analysts elsewhere at the same period that the above samples were taken.

Sanitary Inspections.—Apart from work done for the Military Authorities, 1076 inspections of various premises were made during the year, and 507 subsequent visits were paid in connection with the abatement of nuisances. There were 57 preliminary and 34 statutory notices issued. Of the former 46 and of the latter 31 had been complied with by the end of the year.

Co-operation with the Military Authorities.—Except for a few of the summer months, troops varying from two battalions to a brigade and field ambulance have been billeted in the Borough throughout the year. The majority were located in empty houses, only the overflow being billeted on the inhabitants. Services rendered to them included the inspection of billets, warnings against the occupation of certain houses, provision of extra closet and washing accommodation, removal of night soil and house refuse, notification to the Medical Officers of houses invaded by infectious disease, disinfection of premises and articles of clothing, cleansing of soldiers infested by vermin or attacked by scabies, inspection of premises whence food is supplied to the troops, and removal to hospital of cases of infectious disease when accommodation elsewhere was insufficient.

Thirty-eight cases of measles or German measles and 2 cases of scarlet fever were notified to me during the year by the Medical Officers. I doubt if this list, however, was an exhaustive one.

Laboratory Work.

The following examinations were made by myself of specimens in connection with the diagnosis of diphtheritic infection.

	Diphtheria bacillus found.	Diphtheria bacillus not found.	Hofmann's bacillus found.
Suspected diphtheria ...	9	65	3
Contacts ...	3	17	2
Convalescent diphtheria ...	5	25	1
Convalescent scarlet fever..	8	16	4
	25	123	10

Nineteen samples of sputum were examined for the tubercle bacillus, which was found in 8 instances.

Four samples of spinal fluid were examined for the meningo-coccus, which was found in one specimen.

Samples of water from three wells supplying eight cottages were examined chemically and bacteriologically. Two of the samples, corresponding to seven cottages, afforded evidence of dangerous pollution.

*Sanitary Department,
Municipal Buildings,
Reigate.*

April 17th, 1917.

To the Chairman and Members of the Sanitary Committee.

GENTLEMEN,

ANNUAL REPORT.

In accordance with the suggestion of the Local Government Board that only matters outside the general routine of the department should be reported on, I beg to present my report as follows for the year 1916, the twentieth of its series. Two of the staff are in the Army..

Troops.—The Chief Constable reports that 4993 troops were billeted in the Borough during the year. This however is very considerably below the actual number, as movements of troops have repeatedly taken place of which no official notice has been given.

106 empty houses have been more or less in use during the year as billets, and in addition about 1,200 troops have been billeted on the inhabitants, this number being exclusive of the personnel of the Redhill Remount Depot.

The houses so occupied have been inspected as far as possible, in many instances at the request of the Military, to whom reports have been sent, 1642 visits of inspection having been made. Four lists of houses that should be avoided in billeting troops have been supplied to the Police, each list containing an average of 172 houses.

102 temporary earth closets with necessary screens and roofs have been erected, 104 urine pails provided, 210 feet run of ablution benches fixed and 50 wash hands bowls provided,

The night soil from the temporary earth closets is cleared daily, and the refuse from the houses solely occupied by troops is removed 3 times a week. This work is done by direct labour employed by the Town Council, the Military undertaking to pay the usual departmental charges plus 10 % for supervision and establishment charges.

Considerable delay often occurs when fresh units enter the Borough in obtaining a proper undertaking to pay even out-of-pocket expenses for work done, and, unless such written undertaking is obtained, the Military subsequently repudiate liability. Not infrequently even when the written undertaking has been obtained and the accounts sent in monthly, months (and even a year) afterwards all kinds of difficulties are raised about the payment, and endless correspondence and copies upon copies of letters and of the accounts sent in at the time the work was done, have to be submitted. This is not encouraging to civil officers who have to work with depleted staffs, nor would it be tolerated in any undertaking run on business lines.

126 men attacked with Vermin, or Scabies have been dealt with at the disinfecting station, the men being bathed and suitably treated while their clothes, and kit and equipment is disinfected.

The following articles have also been treated at the disinfecting station. 1,087 horse rugs, 1,258 army blankets, 126 mattresses, 216 bolsters, 44 pillows, 26 quilts, 28 sheets, 1,002 pieces of wearing apparel, 140 kits and equipments.

20 rooms, from which infectious cases of illness have been removed, have been disinfected.

All shops that supply food stuffs to the Army have been inspected as to the quality of the supply and sanitary conditions of the premises. 460 such inspections have been made, and special reports sent to the Food Department of the Local Government Board.

Arsenic in Food Powders.—In October I received a letter from the Chief Food Inspector of the Local Government Board.

The letter stated that recent analyses of baking powder had revealed the presence of considerable amounts of arsenic in one sample, that an Officer of the Board had succeeded in tracing the arsenic contaminated to some acid phosphate manufactured in Scotland, and that the manufacturers both of the acid phosphate and of the baking powder concerned had taken steps to call in all they could of the incriminated material.

The letter further stated “as there may be a somewhat wide distribution of the contaminated material, I think it would be desirable for you to have special attention paid in your district to the sampling of baking powder, egg powder, self raising flour, cream of tartar substitutes, and any material likely to have become affected,” and it further requested that the Board be informed “of any positive results which may be obtained.”

In consequence of this letter I visited almost all the tradesmen in the Borough that use or deal in the articles named, and took (informally) 45 samples, handed them to the Public Analyst, and on receipt of his reports sent particulars of them to the Local Government Board.

On the whole the results of the analyses were satisfactory.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. P. HUMPHERY.

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

